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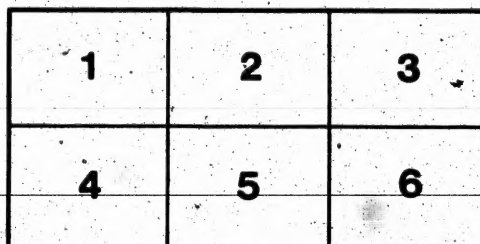
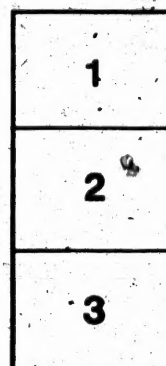
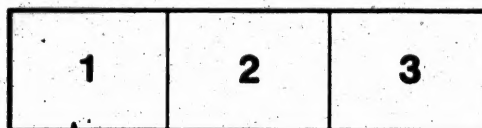
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Printed in 1893, 1894.
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Printed in 1899, 1900, 1901.
A large impression of this Sermon
was printed for gratuitous circulation.
Several thousand copies still remain on
hand, which will be supplied to any
Clergyman or Lay Delegate, in packets
of fifty or more, on application at the
Caxton Press, cor. King & Jarvis Sts.

Toronto, 9th June, 1880.

A FEW REASONS

WHY THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIANS SHOULD
NOT REFUSE TO PARTAKE OF

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A SERMON,
BY THE
REV. W. B. CURRAN, M.A.,

Rector of St. Thomas' Church, Hamilton.

Preached in "All Saints," Toronto, Sunday, August
18th, 1878.

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Caxton Press, corner King and Jarvis Streets, Toronto.

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Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life. JOHN v. 40.

As we from our stand point look back upon the conduct of the Jews, in reference to their reception of Christ, we are led to denounce them in the bitterest terms. We are astonished at their perverseness in not seeing that they really were rejecting the Messiah, thrusting from them their would-be best and truest of friends. Even apart from their not acknowledging as we think they should have done, the Divine personality of Jesus, they should; we consider, at least have treated Him kindly, and, as far as His teachings were not contrary to those of their God, followed them.

When we read of the sayings of Jesus, when we dwell upon His miracles and compare them with the statements of the Prophets, as to what the Messiah would say and do when He came, we are at a loss to understand the apparently wilful blindness of those whose privilege it was to live in Jerusalem during His lifetime.

Day after day, Jesus went about doing good: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, giving sight to the blind, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom; and notwithstanding He was looked upon by the majority as an arrant imposter and a false Christ. When He thought of all He had performed for the people whom God His Father had chosen as His own, when He contemplated what their rejection of Him, would in a future time bring upon them, He was deeply moved, and with feelings of profoundest sorrow and pity, He

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE.

says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." You will not believe that I am the Son of God, the seed of the woman who is to bruise the serpent's head, the one in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed—the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Your eyes are closed that ye cannot see. You are terribly blind that ye will not perceive that my acts are such that proclaim me to be sent from God. You all admit that Moses was Divinely commissioned to lead the children of Israel, because, when he stood before Pharaoh, he wrought two miracles; further, while on the march through the wilderness, on more than one occasion he was the means of miraculously saving the people from famine, and hence destruction by their enemies.

A greater than Moses is now amongst you; one, who, at His own command, arrests nature and makes its laws subservient to His will. I, by these acts, declare Myself to be your Saviour. I ask you to believe in Me, and I promise you in return, eternal life with Me, but ye will not.

All will agree in pronouncing the Jews very perverse. Oh! how, you exclaim, they stood in their own light—in the way of their salvation. Again and again, each of you has said, "Had I lived when Jesus was upon earth, I would have been one of His disciples; I would have gladly followed Him; I would never have lost an opportunity of being with Him to catch His life-giving words, and to see His wonderful deeds. Then again, He seems to have been so very amiable and good, that He must have had the power of drawing me to Him. I could have laid down my life for so excellent and self-denying a person. As to doing what he asked me, it would have been a perfect pleasure."

Have you, while thus thinking of what you would have done and how you would have acted, if you had been in Jerusalem with Jesus, *forgotten* that He is still alive and close to you, and giving you constantly a way of testing your devotion to Him? Why is it

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE.

so many of you really live on and on, as if you denied the fact of the resurrection; as if Jesus were dead, or if you believe Him to be alive, so remote from earth, so far removed from you, that it is a matter of no consequence whether you live unto Him or not!

There is nothing between you and Christ that can conceal you from Him. He can accept your offer to follow Him just as quickly now, as He could a Matthew's, a Peter's, or a John's. He gives you, every time the Holy Communion is spread in your presence, an opportunity of shewing the reality of your grief at the cruel conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees, who hustled Him to an unjust death; and also of proving your desire to follow Him in all things, and to obey His injunctions.

He instituted the Supper known by His name for this very purpose. He left it to be done in all ages, down till His coming again, to constantly remind men and women that He is *still alive*, and holding out to them the offers of salvation.

He has made it *imperative* too that those who believe in Him should by their observance of this simple rite, make known their trust in Him. Many of you who have thought you would have been amongst the disciples, had you lived in their time, have never yet drawn nigh to this table. Is it a harder matter to eat and to drink of those elements than to have forsaken all things, and to have gone with Christ, as did the Apostles? Here is a very easy test of your professed love for your soul, and you will not give it. Then you do not know your own heart. After all, the Jews who put Jesus to death were no worse than you. Very probably you would have been found with them, crying out, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him! Let none of you consider this too harsh a conclusion to arrive at, in reference to those of you who refuse to come, and at the table on which are the elements, the tokens of Christ's love, eat and drink in faith, that you may have life. I am sure, none of you in your hearts wish to be identified with those men who rejected and

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE.

despised Jesus. Possibly you never thought you were putting yourselves amongst such, or yet in the same class of whom He said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

These are not mere words, they are not thoughts spoken to have you one and all for *appearance* sake approach the Communion Table. They are the statements of the facts to be found in the Scriptures.

From the very beginning, God has demanded on the part of man outward acts, by which to give evidence of belief in Him.

In patriarchial times, they consisted of circumcision and sacrifice; in the Mosaic economy, of circumcision, sacrifice, and offerings of different kinds; in the Christian dispensation, that in which we live, they consist of two—BAPTISM and THE LORD'S SUPPER. He then, who would be accounted a true follower of the Lord Jesus, cannot despise either of these ordinances. To do so, is to disobey God; is, in fact, to act independently of Him, and is to try to discover a road to eternal happiness, altogether different to that marked out by the hand of inspiration as the ONLY right, safe and proper one.

Now as the Jews, who fulfilled the requirements of the law, enjoyed certain privileges, and were assured of God's protection, so all who endeavour to carry out Christ's injunctions—the partaking of the Holy Communion amongst others—are guaranteed peculiar and special blessings.

The most important of all the promises attached to the duties devolving upon Christians, are those connected with the Lord's Supper, and paramount is the gift of eternal life. Eternal life is that which belongs essentially to Christ, and which can be imparted to us only after sincere confession of our sins and hearty repentance, by partaking in faith of those elements which represent His body and His blood. "Except, said Jesus, ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood ye have no life in you."

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when you never deem it worth your while to come to it, does it not look like your practically saying you do not believe what God has said respecting it; and further, is it not a rejection on your part of the inestimable gift of eternal life?

To speak after the manner of men: how extremely considerate has God been in the arrangements of His channels of grace. They are such that can easily be made use of by each and every individual. He has not demanded any costly offering. He has said when ye come together for prayer, come as Christians, eat bread, drink wine together, in remembrance of Christ Jesus. His atonement, His sacrifice. All of you, do so. Do it in faith, in the firm persuasion that by and through the merits of the Cross and Passion, you alone obtain remission of your sins, and are made partakers of the Kingdom of heaven, and I will give you spiritual strength—in fact, give you of that life which is hidden in Christ, and which will last with ineffable glory throughout eternity. Because, said Jesus to His followers, "I live, ye shall live also."

Is it not strange so many who call themselves Christians reject these means of salvation?

If hereafter, those of you who do so, find yourselves thrust aside from the ranks of the redeemed, cast into outer darkness, can you possibly accuse God of injustice or unfairness? Supposing, to take a very simple illustration, any of you were to prepare a feast daily for your needy brethren, and extended a general invitation to all to come, would you feel any pity, or entertain the slightest commiseration for those who, from sheer indolence, or miserable pride in refusing to accept of your hospitality, happened to die of starvation? I am very certain you would not. It seems to me, this is just, how God hereafter will regard those who never approached the table of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Many stay away because they are conscious it demands of those who partake, a strictly religious life. They know that it does not look consistent for one

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE.

who is a communicant to indulge in wickedness, either of the tongue or of the body, and therefore, they avoid that which would put a manifest restraint upon their appetites, their passions, their short-comings. As you who so act have no desire to curb these propensities, do not care to give yourselves the trouble to do so, you will not go to Christ, that ye might have life.

You are quite right when you say that a communicant should lead a godly life. This ordinance is a sacrament, by which those who partake of it bind themselves by an oath to the service of our Lord and Saviour. Now it must be an unwillingness to do this which prevents so many in every congregation from eating and drinking of the elements which represent Christ's body and blood. If you really ever expect to derive—as I know you do—any benefit from Christ's death; if you do trust that you may have eternal life—that yours may never be the wages of sin, death—should you not in all reason, employ such means as are provided and set before you, for the rendering the matter a certainty?

If any of you expect to be paid by an insurance company for loss you may happen to sustain, you fulfil its conditions, that of renewing your policies from year to year: should you allow two or three payments to lapse or fall behind, and presented a claim for a recent disaster or accident, do you not know your application would be rejected, and with perfect fairness?

Now look at the case of one standing in the presence of God. His life is being looked into—the rather gone over. He hopes he is going to be permitted to pass in beyond those shining gates into the home of the blessed dead, from which are being wafted the sweetest sounds. The scrutiny proceeds, his life shows years of neglected duties, hurried prayers, formal services, days of neglected Bible readings, communions after communions unpartaken of. *All the conditions laid down to ensure an abundant entrance into glory have been utterly disregarded, treated as if they meant nothing, as if they were written only to fill up the*

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Scriptures, or to give the religion of Jesus a sort of empty form. What can a just God do in such a case, but consign the one at His bar to the doom of the careless, the indifferent and the unbelieving!

Would it be reasonable, right or just in God to treat the open violator of His laws in the same manner as the person who had all along through life kept and observed His commandments? Surely, surely not, and you know it. Can the Judge not turn to the one who has set at naught His will and say "Ye would not come unto me when you could, that ye might have life? Think of this, you who do not care to prepare yourselves to eat and drink at the table of the Lord, who do not wish to put yourselves to the exertion of serving Christ fully; to whom it appears as nothing that He has suffered and died to become a High Priest in the Courts of Heaven, to intercede for your souls with God, that He shed his blood that He might become a Mediator for you, that you might live and not die eternally. Let me again ask you to call to mind your Lord's command in reference to this blessed ordinance of which we are speaking. "Do this in remembrance of me."

What a feeling of sadness will pervade that blessed face on the last day, when he shall look out upon the vast, vast numbers who despised Him; who thought it not worth their while to fulfil His dying request. He longed to have them all with Him everlastingly, to give them the greatest of all gifts—life amidst the pleasures of Heaven, but they would not listen to His counsels, nor act upon His words; they would not heed His ministers, they would go their own way. He must now part from them for ever. He looks at them, and in words which will cut into the very depths of the heart—and which will make them feel it was their own fault—will say, "Depart from me," ye would not come unto me when I stood with outstretched arms to receive you that you might have life. Now, then, you must abide the consequence; you must go to your own place, the one of your own

Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.

choosing, which is an habitation with the devil and his angels.

Oh that scene! How awful!! Surely you, you who now have the opportunity of laying hold of life, will never allow yourselves to be amid that unhappy throng of Christ's despisers, Christ's rejecters, Christ's forgotten ones. Come forward then and begin at the Table of the Lord, to follow your Saviour—to seek to find eternal life. As you kneel in the sight of those blessed emblems of Christ's love, you cannot but think of the past when He suffered for you, died for your sins; and you cannot but think, and with gladness that those same elements serve to remind you of the future, of the hour when He shall again visit this earth, to gather to Him forever His faithful followers.

To those who look for happiness in earthly things, the world is very unsatisfactory; they do not realize it is a path to a better; they see disappointment stamped upon their fondest hopes, and their future looks fearfully dark.

The sincere Christian, on the other hand, regards this life as a passage to a far happier land; as he passes along, he stoops and drinks of the brooks by the way, draws refreshment from prayer, and when ever he can from that blessed ordinance, *the highest* vouchsafed to Christians, the Lord's Supper.

Each occasion is to him more joyous than the last, for he knows he is one stage nearer to Him who has said "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

As the birds and sea-weeds sometimes tell the mariner he is close to a haven where he may find shelter from the stormy winds and tempestuous waves, so do the seasons of Holy Communion proclaim to those, who in faith draw nigh, that they are rapidly approaching the Jerusalem which is above, where, face to face, they shall be with those who having followed Jesus, have gone before, and with Him, whose presence visible to them by the eye of faith has quietly, yet safely, led them through life's journey.

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Will any of you still refuse the gracious offers of Christ? Will he ever look upon any of you and say, when it is too late for repentance, too late for reparation, "Ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life."

Seek ye then the Lord while He may be found.
Call upon Him while he is near. Draw nigh to Him the next opportunity afforded you in the ordinance of the Holy Communion, and, as you do so, may it be yours to feel you can say—

"Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God;
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly good,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquets and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
The brief bright hour of fellowship with Thee.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear;
The feast, though not the love, is passed and gone;
The bread and wine remove, but Thou art near;
Nearer than ever; still my Shield and Sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by;
Yet passing points to the great feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love."



